Democratic Party Puts Off Scheduled Impeachment Vote

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ROBERT S. STRAUSS
. . . "tough resolutions"

LOUISVILLE, Ky., Oct. 25 — The Democratic National Committee, wary of striking a partisan note on a day of international tension, postponed action today on a resolution calling for the impeachment of President Nixon.

Party chairman Robert S. Strauss said the executive committee was "considering some tough resolutions, very critical of the administration, but in the light of the day's developments, we decided to postpone action — at least overnight."

Strauss indicated he favored a resolution calling for Mr. Nixon's removal from office and his replacement by another Republican — presumably Vice President-designate Gerald R. Ford of Michigan.

The full national committee meets Friday to act on policy matters. Meantime, Democratic state chairmen, in a meeting of their own today, called on Congress to provide for a special prosecutor to continue the Watergate investigation and to carry out the preliminary investigation into grounds for impeachment, which the House Judiciary Committee has begun.

The first day of a two-day gathering of top Democratic officials was disrupted and dominated by the fast-breaking developments in Washington, the Mideast and the United Nations. The sense of nervousness about striking the note of harsh partisanship softened many of the comments about Mr. Nixon.

Early in the day, Alex Seiph, a Chicago lawyer who is vice chairman of the party's Delegate Selection Commission, caused a stir by telling reporters, "I strongly suspect that either explicitly or implicitly Brezhnev was told that Nixon would be helped at home by an international crisis."

But Strauss spurried that line of attack, saying "it would serve neither our nation nor our party" to feed such speculation about the President's motives.

Later, the party chairman said action on resolutions had been delayed until Friday, because "we wanted to be absolutely certain this party's actions were responsible." But he forecast "there will be a resolution, and it will be tough. Nothing can be more important to the peace of the world than the restoration of the honest, open government the people of this country have been begging for."

The twin emotions of caution and condemnation were also illustrated by the day's main speaker, Ohio Gov. John J. Gilligan. "It is imperative that we resist in our discussions the normal impulses of partisanship or even the appearances of partisanship," Gilligan said.

But, he added, "It is evident that the President's recent dismissal of an independent prosecutor . . . represents . . . the culmination of a whole series of outrages which have demonstrated beyond a shadow of a doubt that either Mr. Nixon simply and literally does not understand the limitations and restraints that are fundamental in the American system of constitutional government or . . . he has deliberately set out to violate and nullify them."

The party's executive committee handled a couple of housekeeping chores in connection with the Democrats' planned mid-term conference in December, 1974. It approved language opening the agenda to policy matters cleared by the national committee and it worked out a compromise on the question of alternates for elected Democratic officials, who will automatically be delegates to the conference.

Under the compromise, governors can send alternates, but senators and representatives will have to attend themselves or forfeit their votes.